

German Cancer Research Center calls for immediate ban on tobacco advertising

On 31 May 2012 is World No Tobacco Day 2012, which has been initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO). The Non-Smokers' Action Alliance (ABNR) has created this year's motto for Germany: "Don't let yourself be taken in! Smoking knows only one winner: the tobacco industry". The German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) has issued a new volume of its "Rote Reihe" (red series) on the topic: "Zigarettenwerbung in Deutschland - Marketing für ein gesundheitsgefährdendes Produkt" (Cigarette advertising in Germany – Marketing for a harmful product).

Cigarette advertising is hazardous to our health, because it promotes smoking and has an effect on the overall consumption of cigarettes. Tobacco advertising contributes to young people taking up smoking and makes it harder for smokers to quit. The most recent report issued by the German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) on the topic of "Zigarettenwerbung in Deutschland - Marketing für ein gesundheitsgefährdendes Produkt" (Cigarette advertising in Germany – Marketing for a harmful product), shows how much public life is penetrated by tobacco industry marketing: From outdoor advertising at public transport stations and stops over movie theaters, Internet offers, event marketing, gift promotions and sponsoring through to advertisements in supermarkets and at gas stations – tobacco companies make use of every means of addressing the public. Germany is the only EU member state which still allows outdoor tobacco advertising.

"The German Cancer Research Center demands an immediate ban on cigarette advertising," declares DKFZ's Chairman of the Management Board, Prof. Dr. Otmar D. Wiestler. "The practice of cigarette advertising in this country is irresponsible. Cigarettes are fundamentally different from any other legally sold product, because they are toxic and pose the largest avoidable cancer risk. The fact that they are extremely hazardous to health is enough reason for them to have a special status. Therefore they should also be given a special status by a comprehensive advertising ban as it does not exist for any other consumer product." The legal conditions for such a ban are already in place: Back in 2003, Germany signed and ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and thereby committed itself to translating its content, including a tobacco advertising ban, into German law. Germany's federal constitutional court had decided back in 1997 that a tobacco advertising ban is constitutional. It is time to take action.

The publication by the German Cancer Research Center, "Zigarettenwerbung in Deutschland – Marketing für ein gesundheitsgefährdendes Produkt" (in German), can be obtained from DKFZ's Division of Cancer Prevention at:

who-cc@dkfz.de

or can be accessed at:

http://www.dkfz.de/de/tabakkontrolle/download/Publikationen/RoteReihe/Band_18_Zigarette_nwerbung_in_Deutschland.pdf

The publication on the constitutionality of a comprehensive tobacco advertising ban in Germany, "Verfassungsmäßigkeit eines umfassenden Tabakwerbeverbotes in Deutschland", can be accessed at:

http://www.dkfz.de/de/tabakkontrolle/download/Publikationen/Fakten/Factsheet_Verfassungsmaessigkeit_Tabakwerbeverbot.pdf

The German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) with its more than 2,500 employees is the largest biomedical research institute in Germany. At DKFZ, more than 1,000 scientists investigate how cancer develops, identify cancer risk factors and endeavor to find new strategies to prevent people from getting cancer. They develop novel approaches to make tumor diagnosis more precise and treatment of cancer patients more successful. Jointly with Heidelberg University Hospital, DKFZ has established the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Heidelberg where promising approaches from cancer research are translated into the clinic. The staff of the Cancer Information Service (KID) offers information about the widespread disease of cancer for patients, their families, and the general public. The center is a member of the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centers. Ninety percent of its funding comes from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the remaining ten percent from the State of Baden-Württemberg.

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